



*Always Ready
Always There*

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Idaho National Guard holds its first- ever German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge competition

Story and photo by Spc. Christian Duplessie

It is not every day that a National Guardsman gets the opportunity to earn a badge from another country.

The morning of Saturday, September 13 presented a unique opportunity to Idaho soldiers during a special German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge competition. It was the first time the grueling 14-hour day of physical feats and marksmanship was offered for Idaho guardsmen.

"We really wanted to create an event to reward soldiers and give them a change of pace from all of the hard training they do the rest of the year," said Recruiting and Retention Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Kish.

The day began at the Boise State University Recreation Center where competitors performed a 100-meter swim while wearing the Army Combat Uniform. After the swim, soldiers completed a basic fitness test, consisting of a 100-meter shuttle run, a flexed arm hang assessment and a 1000-



Staff Sgt. Leah Leavitt of C Co. 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion receives her Bronze level German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge from German Sergeant Major Mike Kitzler at the GAFPB Awards Ceremony, Saturday, September 13, 2014.

meter run. The competition then moved out to the Orchard Combat Training Center where competitors put their marksmanship to the test with an M-9 pistol.

With the sun beating down and temperatures in the mid 80's, competitors then embarked on a ruck-march. The distance of the march varied, depending upon which level of badge a soldier was attempting to earn.

When all was said and done, 56 of the 61 competitors earned the honor of being pinned by visiting German Sgt. Maj. Mike Kitzler with a German Armed Forces Proficiency badge.

"I want to say thank you, this organization and preparation was outstanding and this was one of the best German Armed Forces Badge Competitions I've seen" said Sgt. Major Kitzler.

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